

DEMOCRATS RAISE TAXES AFTER ONLY TWO WEEKS IN POWER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, on the first day that Republicans took control of the Congress in 1995, one of their very first actions was to establish a rule that required a supermajority, or three-fifths vote, to raise taxes. This was a good thing, Madam Speaker. On the very first day of Congress in 2007, however, the Democrats established new rules in this Chamber to make it easier to raise taxes with a simple majority vote.

And now, after just 2 weeks in power, the Democrats, our colleagues, have already passed legislation today to raise taxes. What is worse, the taxes that are collected under this new bill will not be going toward deficit reduction or toward paying down the Federal debt. The money is going to be set aside in a special account for more spending.

In Minnesota, we had a phrase when we were in session. We said, hold on to your wallets. And we can say that to the American people right now.

As a Federal tax litigation attorney myself, as a small business owner with my husband Marcus, and as a mother to Lucas, Harrison, Elisa, Caroline, and Sophia, and our 23 foster children, I can tell you as a parent the best way to grow an economy, the best way to raise more jobs is not to raise taxes but to let people, families, keep more of their hard-earned money.

In 2003, tax relief was passed, and the great thing is that 7.2 million jobs were created. In fact, our economy has been adding jobs for 40 straight months. The unemployment rate is incredibly low, at 4.5 percent, well below the average of the last 40 years.

Nowhere are the results more evident, Madam Speaker, than in my home State of Minnesota, which has closed out the calendar year with 54,000 more jobs than at the end of 2005, the strongest job growth since 1999. Our State's annual job growth rate of 2 percent has outpaced the national rate of 1.4 percent. Our unemployment rate is the envy of the Nation, phenomenally low at 4.2 percent.

Meanwhile, tax revenues are absolutely surging into the Treasury. Guess what? Federal receipts rose 14 percent in 2005, 11 percent in 2006, and they kept rising by 9 percent the first 2 months of 2007. These are the highest consecutive revenue increases in the past 25 years.

America, did you hear that? The highest revenue increases in the past 25 years. They come on the heels of the largest tax relief measures in American history.

□ 1900

And the budget deficit, in turn, has fallen \$165 billion over 2 years. And just as the economy is gaining tremendous momentum, now, unfortunately, my

Democrat colleagues are saying, this is the time to raise taxes.

Madam Speaker, I have learned very quickly in the few days I have been here in Washington, D.C., that facts don't always get in the way of people's opinions here in this fair city. But it is hard to dispute 3 years of unparalleled prosperity.

It is important that we recognize what tax relief does for the average American. It gives us money, a chance to grow a business, a chance to raise our kids while growing the economy and raising a lot more jobs in the process.

I urge my colleagues here in this Chamber, my esteemed colleagues who I have come to respect, to reject new taxes. Instead, let's do this. Let's work to make the tax reduction rates permanent now, while we can, and continue to reduce the overall tax burden.

The American people deserve our best, and the colleagues here are the best from across the country. Let's do that for the American people.

SRI LANKA'S CIVILIANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to bring attention to the full blown violence taking place in Sri Lanka. The last round of talks in Geneva ended up in a failure, and there are no signs of new negotiations. There is no peaceful solution in sight, and it is the civilians who are desperately suffering.

Since 1983, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has been in a military confrontation with the Government of Sri Lanka to win a separate ethnic minority Tamil state. Since last April, more than 200,000 people have been displaced from their homes by the escalation in violence and insecurity. And this is in addition to more than 310,000 people who were displaced previously due to the conflict.

Now, because of this violence, the main highway connecting the two major areas in the north and east region of the country is closed, forcing civilians to use tortuous routes to reach safety. In recent months about 20,000 people have fled through jungles and treacherous waterways towards the government-controlled territory.

Thousands who have not fled are trapped in eastern Sri Lanka and caught between the intense crossfire. Every day there are more news stories highlighting the increasing casualties among the civilian populations, especially children and young adults. Violence continues in other parts of the island nation as well. And many civilians have been killed in air raids and bus bombings in recent weeks. Families live in constant fear, anxiously hoping for their security.

Now, meanwhile, Madam Speaker, access for humanitarian agencies has

been a growing problem over the past year. Civilians in Jaffna in the north and in the affected districts of the east have had great difficulty obtaining necessary food and medical supplies.

Both the government and the Tigers should commit to providing humanitarian agencies with unregulated access and full support.

Madam Speaker, the army says the civilians are being used as human shields by the Tamil Tigers. The Tigers deny this claim and accuse the army of targeting civilians to facilitate their forthcoming offensive. And regardless of blame, innocent civilians are dying.

After nearly 25 years of violence, it is clear: there can be no military solution to the conflict. A negotiated political settlement must be reached, and that one will have to be fair to all of the ethnic communities living in the country of Sri Lanka.

I am deeply troubled by the worsening situation in Sri Lanka, Madam Speaker, and it must be addressed by the United States. I commend the commitment by the Bush administration to provide funding for refugees, but I strongly urge President Bush to further U.S. involvement to help secure a lasting peace.

Last week I added my name to a letter urging President Bush to appoint a special envoy for Sri Lanka. The letter is being circulated by my friend from New Jersey, Mr. RUSH HOLT. And I urge my colleagues to also sign on. By naming a special envoy, the U.S. can create a personal monitoring presence in the country and make recommendations for steps to lead to peace. Sri Lanka, more than ever before, needs U.S. engagement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks).

EVERYONE SUPPORTS THE TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I have never met anyone who did not support our troops. Sometimes, however, we hear accusations that someone or some group does not support the men and women serving in our Armed Forces. But this is pure demagoguery, and it is intellectually dishonest. The accusers play on emotions to gain support for controversial policies, implying that those who disagree are unpatriotic. But keeping our troops out of harm's way, especially when the war is unnecessary, is never unpatriotic. There is no better way to support the troops.

Since we now know that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and was